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ROTHBURY
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

R E P O R T

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER

FOR THE

Year ending 31st December, 1920.

Rothbury :

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THE ROTHBURY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1920.

ROTHBURY,

26th March, 1921.

TO MR. CLARK, AND GENTLEMEN,

Allow me to present you with this, my 25th Annual Report, for the year ending 31st December, 1920.

The District covers an area of 948 acres, excluding water, and practically, is situate on the North and South banks of the river Coquet. The surface is of a sandy peat nature resting on a gravelly bed in places and on a boulder clay, then on freestone (sandstone) rocks with limestone deep beneath. At the 1911 Census, there are 284 occupied houses, with a population of 1150 this gives an average of 4 persons to each, thus but little overcrowding. There are no unoccupied houses; except that some rent the houses, and come out in the good weather. Many residents take in outside lodgers. There is no large Manufactory or Industry. Small neighbouring Colleries, have a few residents here; but these are building their own houses to occupy. It is a health and pleasure resort, being enclosed with fine Hills.

The Rateable value at March 20th, was £6884 and the assessable value £7,965. The amount levied for the District rate was £650 at a rate of 2s. 2d. in £; whilst that for the Guardians, at 4s. 2d. was £1337. This latter for your own Guardians purposes', covers only about 1s. 5d. in the

£, the main amount being called up for the County purposes, Roads, Asylum, Prison, Education, Etc. The Out-door relief for the entire Union, was for 27 persons, at a cost of £306; last year, it was for 26 persons, costing £170. During the year, there was an average of 15 persons in the Union House (8 male, 6 female and 1 child). There are also 13 feeble minded young women belonging to Newcastle, and paid for by that Board. The number of Tramps were 208 (males 199, women 11 and 7 children). Last year, there were only 80. There are no persons belonging to your district in the County Asylum, but 13 belonging to the Union.

The items of your Indebtedness are : for **Sewerage** laid down in 1910, with 20 years to run, at a cost of £5,250, is £3,415. There being paid off £179 of Capital, and £121 of Interest each year, entailing a rate of 1s. in the pound.

The **Cemetery** is conjoint with a portion of the Rural district the Rural part of the Parish. It was formed in 1897, at a cost of £1,580, extended over 30 years, with now 8 years to run. Your share of the debt is £195, there being paid off annually £31 of capital, and £9 of interest. The rate required is about 3d. in the £.

The **Workhouse** for the entire Union, was built in 1905, at a cost of £5180, has 20 years to run still, with a debt of £1884. There is paid off annually £148 capital, and £65 of interest. Your Council contributes one-eighth

The **Number of Births**, that occurred during the year, was 22, as against 27 of last year. As two were of parents not belonging the district, this leaves 20 who did. Of these 20, 11 were males and 9 females. Estimating the population at 1,050, this is at a rate of 19·0 per 1000 of the population, your previous average is 20·0. That for England and Wales is 25·4, being the highest for a long while. They were born : during the 1st. Quarter, 4, the 2nd 4, the 3rd 6, and the last 6. There was one born out of wedlock. which survived, at the Union House.

Of these 20, only 1 died before reaching the age of 1 years, hence in infancy. This is at a rate of 55·5, against your average of 75·0 per 1000 born. Last year there were 3 such deaths. The rate for England and Wales, is 80·0 being its lowest (and best) on record. This child died when 8 months old, of Acute Gastritis. All Births should now be immediately notified to the County Medical Officer of Health, at Newcastle. The County Council now provide a Maternity and Health visitor, who lives in Rothbury. Of the children born in 1920, there were 86·4 successfully vaccinated, and in 1919, 61·5.

The total number of **Deaths** registered in the District was 20, but one of these did not belong to the district. There was one who did, but died whilst away at Hospital, and this leaves the nett 20 as before, against 19 of last year. This is equal to a rate of 19·0 per 1000 per annum, against your average of 15·1 ; whilst that for England and Wales is only 12·4 and is very low. Of these deaths, 9 were males, and eleven females. The age periods at which they occurred, were ; under 1 year, 1 ; from 25 to 45, 4 ; from 45 to 65, 6 ; and above that, 9. Of these latter, 1 was under 70 ; 4 others from 70 to 80 ; and 4 more over that, the eldest being 86. They occurred during Jan. 5 ; Feb. 1 ; May 2 ; June 1 ; July 3 ; Aug. 1 ; Sept. 1 ; Nov. 2 ; Dec. 4. A Young man who went to the Hospital at Newcastle, died there of apoplexy, aged 32 ; the Stranger belonging to the Rural District (Wingates), and ailing with Heart trouble after the Influenza, died here.

As the Births were 18, and the Deaths 20, there was no natural increase in the population.

Under the class of the Zymotic, (or Epidemic) class of diseases, there were not any deaths. During the last 10 years the rate has averaged only 0·4.

Phthisis (Tuberculosis of the Lungs), did not cause any deaths. Your average has been about 0·8 per 1000.

Other Tubercular diseases caused 1 death, that of a young woman aged 26, the bowels being affected. She went away for operation, but died later. It was in her family.

Cancer caused 3 deaths, 2 of males, and 1 female. They were all affected internally. One was aged 50, the others being 78 and 79. Disinfection of the room was advised. There seems to be a little tendency to increase. From the year 1877 during each of the ten years, the rates have been 0·58, 0·65, 0·7, and to 1916 0·95. Last year there were 4, making the last 3 years 2·5. It is the same over England and Wales. **Bronchitis** caused 2, a Female aged 30, and Male aged 29. This latter, simulated Phthisis, but was not so decided upon, there being no Bacteria found. **Heart disease** caused 5, Peritonitis 1, Gastro-enteritis 1, in the Infant mentioned above, aged 8 months ; Apoplexy 4 ; Senile decay, 1, other definite diseases 2.

The Coroner did not hold any Inquests, and there were no proceedings before the Magistrates.

There are 2 Institutions in your district that receive persons that are ill, for treatment. The Cottage Hospital, and the Union House. At the latter, 1 inmate died of Apoplexy, for further particulars see earlier paragraph. At the Cottage Hospital, there were 9 Patients under treatment belonging to the Urban & Rural Districts, 1 of whom died of Peritonitis ; there were also 39 Convalescents admitted from outside the District.

There were no patients from your District, under treatment in the County Asylum during the year.

There is no Common Lodging house now.

Under the **Notification of Diseases Act**, (other than Measles), there were only 2 cases notified. They were both arising from Erysipelas. They were on the face, one of each sex, and ages 35 and 60. There were no

unsanitary conditions. A case of Ophthalmia in Infants was reported, it recovered.

The **Measles** came to an end of the very extensive outbreak, in January. see the last Annual report.

Phthisis (Tuberculosis of the Lungs), has not been notified during the year. **Tuberculosis of other parts**, a case was notified as mentioned above, in the bowels, a female aged 26, ending fatally after return home, after operation. It was in the family. There were no cases of Pneumonia notified during the year. There are 2 cases of Tuberculosis belonging to the district, more or less under treatment, one being away.

The **Influenza**, is never really away from us now, it simmers down, and then for some climatic or other reason, again springs into more virulent and obvious existence. Monthly relapses are apt to occur, and fresh outbreaks, in 6 to 9 months or so, periods of apparent rest. It may be the system is again capable of fresh invasion then.

Many cases of Pneumonia, Bronchitis, Gastric and Heart troubles, are but complications and expressions of this quasi malarial trouble. There were no marked virulent outbreaks this year. A male aged 59, who had it at Wingates in the Rural area, succumbed whilst on a visit here. For further particulars, see my last Annual report.

The **Isolation Hospital**, near Whitton Burn, has not been made use of during the year. There are 2 to 3 beds in the old part for Smallpox, and 8 in the new, for other diseases. It is worked in conjunction with the Rural

There were no proceedings taken before the Magistrates. The returns of Infectious disease sent to me, are each week regularly transmitted to the Ministry of Health, and the County Council.

Bacterial examinations were made, of specimens sent from 4 persons. They were all for suspected Phthisis but proved negative ; 3 related to males, and 1 to a female.

Under the **Factory and Workshops Act** there are 3 places using machine power to a small extent. A Saw Mill, Ærated Water Works, and Printing Works. At the latter a w.c. not in sanitary order has been rectified. The others are in order. There are 16 Workshops, comprising, 2 Boot repairers and makers ; 3 Tailors, one which had the Walls attended to after notice, and another gave full permission to Women workers to use their private w.c. ; 1 blacksmith ; 2 Cycle repairers ; 1 Sadler ; 2 Bakers, one whitewashed walls after notice ; 1 Plumber ; 1 Dressmaker ; 1 Milliner, here a proper w.c. is needed ; 1 Beer bottler ; 1 Photographer ; 1 Gas Works. One of the Bootmakers has had good additions for work-room, 36 visits were made. There are not any underground Bakeries, a large amount of Bread ready made, is brought into the district for sale. There are no out-workers practically.

Under the **Dairy and Cow Sheds Act** there are none keeping Cows that store the milk, all is taken away and delivered at once. The Utensils are kept clean, and so are the Byres mostly, a few cautions only being needed. These are paved and drained lighted and ventilated. The Cows are all let out into the pastures on every favourable occasion, being rarely in except at night. The doors are freely kept open. Situated in the district, there are 8 persons keeping Cows, and selling the milk. They own 27 Cows, and provide 35 gallons of milk daily. There are 2 Farmers living outside the district, who send milk into it. They keep 20 Cows, and supply about 155 Quarts daily ; both being in satisfactory conditions. The retail price was up to 11d. per Quart. Only 4 are really registered. We made 52 visits. There were no Cows reported Tubercular. A large amount of Condensed Milk in tins, is sold in the district. I have not heard of any Mothers making application for milk to the Council.

The **Slaughter Houses** are two in number, registered. They are limewashed and kept clean, well paved, drained, and watered. One is too near the house back door and is awaiting more favourable conditions, for removal and rebuilding,

The **Schools.** The **Higher Grade** has now 64 Scholars, its sanitary arrangements are in order ; but the building and site are quite inadequate and there is practically, no playground.

The **Elementary Schools**, are in very good condition, sanitary and accommodation. This, is for 350 Scholars, and this year there are 132 on the books. In 1913, there were 175.

The **Water Supplies** are two, the Main Village, and the Hillside, both in the hands of Private owners. See my last Annual report. Your Board were trying to purchase the Main supply when this disastrous War broke out, and by stopping all borrowing powers, broke off the negotiations. Then the Tynemouth Water taking the Great Tosson Springs, have negotiated with the Water Company to take over the Rothbury supply, subject to the consent of the Urban Council to such terms etc., as the Tynemouth propound. A conjoint Meeting was held and your Council could not agree with the guarantees, charges, leases etc. that the latter offered. Negotiations are still proceeding, and meetings and much correspondence has been given to this serious matter for Rothbury. It is felt, that the Hillside should be supplied by the Council, and if they possessed the Rothbury Main supply, they can see their way to give a supply, on a reasonable rate charge to the District. The Tynemouth do not undertake this, nor will the old Main Company. Leave has been given to the Council to borrow the necessary money, under certain enquiries.

The **Sewerage Scheme**, continues in good working order, being systematically looked after by your Inspector. I find on visiting, the Tanks and Filter Beds and all working parts, in good working order. The effluent is all but colourless, without smell, and clear.

The **House Scavenging** is attended to by the Tenants, some have to empty the middens through the dwelling houses. In others, two or more use the same receptacle, hence this quickly fills, and although the owner agrees then to pay for the emptying, yet the carter cannot be got to remove the refuse at present. Some day I hope your Board will do this themselves, perhaps by contract with a carter, going round say twice a week, tubs to be placed at roadside at a given hour in the morning and then to be emptied into the Cart and led to the Refuse tip up, or other suitable place. I am sure, that if these places were emptied, now, as the Law requires, every 6 weeks, the expense in a Rate would be less ; and no accumulation of filth. The Road Scavenging is well attended to, and the holes being filled up. Bridge Street needs attention.

The **Housing of the Working Classes**. This survey was completely carried out by your Inspector and myself in 1914 and fully reported on. There is a slight shortage of houses, but people living outside have rented or bought houses here, and come out in the holiday times. If this lessened, and the Lee Colliery went on with its house building, there would probably be all but sufficient. There are 14 houses where the average of persons per room, is over 2, and hence according to the 1911 Census standard, overcrowded. A few houses for workmen, bona fide living in the place, at a reasonable rent would be an advantage.

Under the **House Inspection Act**, completed in 1914, there are not any houses in the District unfit to occupy. There are a few, chiefly in the Malting Yard,

where the tenants are answerable for the dilapidation these have been rectified now by the owners. Others there, bought and greatly improved. In Bridge Street, if they had more land available, much could be done. A large number of houses have been sold and bought during the last 2 years ; many of these have had extensive addition improvements. unfortunately several will be in the hands of non-residents. No new ones have been built, the cost being quite prohibitive. A large one at Whitton has been given permission to drain into your sewerage at an annual charge, in lieu of rates. New sanitary arrangements have been built in the Malting Yard and in Bridge Street. An unsanitary w.c. in Providence Lane was rectified ; also one attached to a Printing Works. At a Tailoring establishment leave is given to women-workers to use the private house w.c.

We met a Sanitation and House Inquiry Committee, going round the District, with them.

Your Inspector regularly goes over certain portions of the District, and each meeting, reports to the Board

I am indebted to the late Mr. Hudson, of Cragside, for the following particulars concerning Rainfall, etc., taken at Cragside, 405 feet above the sea level :—

		Rainfall in inches	Number of Wet Days	Hours of Sunshine
January	..	2·73	20	62
February	...	1·73	9	117
March	...	2·75	13	171
April	...	3·42	19	138
May	3·56	14	227
June	0·99	7	210
July	3·45	15	109
August	...	2·69	9	136
September	...	1·41	10	119
October	...	2·31	8	73
November	...	1·09	6	66
December	...	6·16	24	28
TOTAL ..		32·29	154	1461

The rainfall is about your average, for the last 25 years it is 32·71 inches. It was a fairly dry year until December which was very wet. The number of wet days was less than the average of 170, and hours of sunshine a little more than the average of 1423 hours, but were very little at the latter part of the year,

Your obedient servant,

F. BARROW,

Medical Officer of Health

